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ABSTRACT

Research has indicated that a primary difference between effective and ineffective schools is the principal. However, the truly effective principal is uncommon in today's public schools, and female principals are even scarcer. Effective principals, regardless of gender, get things accomplished in schools. Their effectiveness results from ability to determine staff strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly. Research indicates that teachers experience more job satisfaction with a female principal. If teachers prefer female principals, why are women underrepresented in the principalship? This paper presents findings of a study that identifies and compares personality traits exhibited by 79 female potential administrators and 82 male potential administrators enrolled at Western Kentucky University with traits of a national sample of 1,024 practicing administrators and with an "Executive Educator" selection of "top 100" (n=83) and "Rising Star" (n=89) school executives in 1984. Results, based on Myers-Briggs Type Indicator data, show conclusive similarities between female potential administrators and practicing administrators, but do not reflect great similarity with "rising stars" or "top 100" educational administrators. Perhaps female potential administrators are mimicking the behavior of practicing principals or inhibiting characteristics such as extraversion and intuition. (36 references) (MLH)

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FEMALE POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS:

A STUDY IN PERSONALITY

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A paper presented for presentation at the annual meeting of the **Western Kentucky University Women's Studies Conference** in Bowling Green, KY. September 26-28, 1990.

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FEMALE POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS
A STUDY IN PERSONALITY

ABSTRACT

After almost a decade of reform, public schools are perceived as largely ineffective and frequently contributing to, rather than solving, the problems of young people. Research has indicated that one of the primary differences between effective and ineffective schools is the principal. However, the truly effective principal is infrequent in today's public schools and female principals are even more scarce; in fact, they could be classified as an anomaly in most schools, particularly public high school.

Effective principals, regardless of gender, get things completed in schools. Their effectiveness results from the competence to determine the strengths and weaknesses of staff and to respond accordingly. Research indicates that teachers experience more job satisfaction with a female principal, largely due to the female's ability to more accurately assess strengths and provide appropriate responses. If teachers prefer female principals, why are women under represented in the principalship?

Several answers to this question are both logical and reasonable; training, tradition, the "good ole boys" concept, history, lack of mobility, equity in opportunity, and the subject of this research, personality.

FEMALE POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS:

A STUDY IN PERSONALITY

After almost a decade of reform, public schools are perceived as largely ineffective and frequently contributing to, rather than solving, the problems of young people. Research has indicated that one of the primary differences between effective and ineffective schools is the principal (Dwyer, Barnett, & Lee, 1987). However, the truly effective principal is infrequent in today's public schools. Female principals are quite scarce; in fact, they could be classified as an anomaly in most schools, particularly public high school (Swaboda and Vanderbosch, 1986).

BACKGROUND

Effective principals, regardless of gender, get things completed in schools. Their effectiveness results from the competence to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the staff and to respond accordingly (Patterson, Purkey, Parker, 1986). Research indicates that teachers experience more job satisfaction with a female principal, (Coursen & Mazzarella, 1985), largely due to the female's ability to more accurately assesses strengths and provide appropriate responses (Tibbetts, 1986). However, if teachers prefer female principals, why are women accordingly underrepresented in the principalships (Johnson & Douglas, 1986)?

Several answers are logical and reasonable; training (Skadeshaft, 1985; Edson, 1986; Grady & Bohling-Philippi, 1988), tradition (Hilliard, 1975), the "good ole boys" network (Levandowski, 1977; Soolow, 1978), history (Benton, 1986), lack of mobility (Moore & Sagaria, 1986), equity in opportunity (Yeakey, Johnston & Adkinson, 1986; Ponder, 1988), and the subject of this research, personality (Knudson, 1986).

The history and tradition arguments are not entirely accurate because the percentage of women in the principalship has actually declined in recent years. For example, in 1928 women occupied fifty-five percent (55%) of all principalships (Loveday-Dawson, 1980). In 1986 that figure had decreased to only twenty-two percent (22%) and in 1965 only 6.6% of all secondary school principals were female (Gabler, 1987).

Some research indicates that the male network has presented a viable obstacle to female entrance into educational administration (Webber, Feldman & Pohling, 1981). However, this research is dedicated to the premise that certain personality types are also determinants for potential female administrators. What are the personality types and what are their implications for women administrators?

PERSONALITY RESEARCH

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was developed by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers based on the work of the Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung (Carlyn, 1977). Jung (1923/1971) illustrated the habitual patterns of human behavior. His research indicated that people prefer different occupations, have different strengths and weaknesses, and are interested in different things. His theory alleged that similar personality types were agreeable to work with and understand, while different personality types were frequently difficult to work with or understand (Mamchur, 1988).

The MBTI is an informal questionnaire designed to identify our natural preferences, strengths, and temperaments. The MBTI (Form F) uses 166 concise questions and word pair combinations to ascertain different styles of perception, judgement, sources of energy, and lifestyle (Hirsh, 1985). In practical terms the MBTI analyzes how we like to gather information, make decisions, where we derive and direct our energy, and how we deal with our

environment (Duch, 1982). The MBTI reports a combination of four letters (e.g. ENFP, ISTJ). These four letter combinations are derived from four pairs of terms describing the functions mentioned earlier.

The letters I and E are used to describe "introversion" (I) or "extraversion" (E) (sources or direction of energy). Introverts encounter their energies focused internally in the pursuit of concepts and ideas. Solitary activities are needed repeatedly by introverts to sustain their energy level. Extroverts enternalilize their energies in an outside world of people and things. Extroverts require other people to maintain or increase their energy level (Carskadon, 1979).

The letters S and N indicate two rudimentary means of perceiving and collecting information or gathering data from the environment. "Sensing" (S) types gather data through the five senses. They are practical, realistic, and prefer factual data from a sixth sense, intuition. They commonly are imaginative, innovative, look for possibilities, and are concerned with theory (Hicks, 1984).

The letters T and F contrast two different techniques for making decisions, "thinking" (T) or "feeling" (F). Thinking types prefer to make decisions based on objective data. The feeling types choose to make decisions based on personal, subjective data (Korton, 1976).

The letters J and P imply differences in lifestyles. Those people who prefer the "judging
(J) mode, have a tendency to live an orderly, planned existence. They are predisposed toward systematic and decisive actions. Those who prefer the "perceiving" (P) mode favor a more spontaneous and flexible lifestyle. They typically are more open and adaptive and normally seek more data or options before acting (Cooper & Scalise, 1974).

The four parts of letters allow sixteen different four-letter combinations to describe individual personality types (see Figure 1). Can these patterns of personality be quantified to reflect current or potential patterns of behavior exemplified by successful administrators

(Roberds-Baxter, 1986)?

METHODOLGY

How do current students in educational administration preparation programs compare with groups of practicing administrators? Are certain personality types more predominant with the successful educational administrators? Are there methods of identifying the personality types of the administrators who are the most successful?

During the past three years the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was administered to 161 potential administrators enrolled in graduate educational administration courses at Western Kentucky University (WKU). Seventy-nine of the students surveyed were female, and eighty-two were male. The substantially equal distribution of males and females in the population was representative of other reported research (Mertz & Venditti, 1985). The female potential administrator's personality types are displayed in Figure 1.

The **EXECUTIVE EDUCATOR** selected the "Top 100" (February, 1984) and the "Rising Stars" (April, 1984) among practicing educational administrators. These individuals were selected by a panel of independent jurors from a continent-wide pool of nominees. The "Top 100" were those believed to be one hundred of the best educational administrators, while the "Rising Stars" were those perceived to be tomorrow's best and brightest leaders. Both populations were administered the MBTI (Leuder, 1986a, 1986b) and the results reported for comparison (see Figure 1).

A national sample of 1,024 practicing elementary and secondary administrators (Figure 1) was reported which can be utilized for contrast (Myers and McCaulley, 1985).

FINDINGS

This research utilizes data collect from the female potential administrators enrolled at WKU. The female respondents were 41.0% introverts and 50% extroverts; 54.4% were sensing and 45.6% were intuitive; 48.1% were thinking and 51.9% were feeling; and, 20.2% were perceiving and 79.8% were judging.

When compared to the national sample of practicing elementary and secondary school administrators, the WKU female potential administrators were very similar in reference to introversion (41.9% vs. 41.0%), slightly more intuitive (45.6% vs. 40.1), very similar in thinking (48.1% vs. 49.7%), and slightly more judging (79.8% vs. 70.0%). Overall, the comparisons were particularly consistent between the female potential principals and the practicing principals. The significant differences depicted were intuition and judging which have repeatedly been sterotyped as "female" attributes (Grambs, 1976; Buxton, Patterson & Fansher, 1982; Fansher & Buxton, 1984).

In comparison with the "Top 100" public school executives, the female potential administrators were somewhat more introverted (41.9% vs. 32.4%), extremely more sensing (54.4% vs. 28.8%), somewhat less in regard to thinking (48.1% vs. 60.2%), and somewhat more judging (79.8% vs. 71.8%).

When compared to the "Rising Stars" in educational administration, significant differences between the two groups were also found. WKU female potential administrators were far more introverted (41.9% vs. 22.5%), far more sensing (54.4% vs. 30.3%), considerably less thinking (48.1% vs. 65.1%) and almost equally judging (79.8% vs. 79.7%).

CONCLUSION

The most apparent conclusion illustrated by this limited sample is the conclusive similarities between the female potential administrators and the practicing administrators. However, more significantly, the female potential administrators do not reflect a substantial degree of similarity with the "Rising Stars" or the "Top 100" educational administrators. If the "Rising Stars" are indeed indicative of a new trend in educational administration, then obviously WKU female potential administrators did not exhibit the personality traits distinctive of successful educational administrators. The discrepancy was most obvious in two areas, introversion/extraversion and intuition/sensing.

The questions raised by this research are more numerous than the answers provided. For example, are the female potential administrators mimicking behavior exhibited by practicing principals, or is the profession attracting those potential administrators who may not be reflective of characteristics exhibited by new principals? Have the females been trained to inhibit the characteristics of extraversion and intuition?

Females currently represent only one-fourth of all school administrators. If women wish to increase their representation in educational administration, the implication is clear. Females should emulate the attributes of the "Top 100" and the "Rising Stars"; specifically, the attributes of extraversion and intuition.

There has never been a greater opportunity to bring equity to educational administration. Approximately fifty percent of the practicing principals will retire in the next decade. The door is open for those who are ready to accept the challenge. Are the female potential administrators prepared?

FIGURE 1

COMPOSITE

A. WKU Students (n=79)
B. National Sample (n=1024)
C. Top 100 (n=83)
D. Rising Stars (n=89)

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
A. 8.9	A. 8.9	A. 5.1	A. 3.8
B. 12.5	B. 7.4	B. 3.9	B. 5.3
C. 9.6	C. 3.6	C. 4.8	C. 8.4
D. 9.0	D. 0.0	D. 3.4	D. 6.7

ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
A. 2.5	A. 3.8	A. 5.1	A. 3.8
B. 1.5	B. 2.6	B. 5.3	B. 2.5
C. 0.0	C. 1.2	C. 3.6	C. 1.2
D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 3.4

ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
A. 0.0	A. 6.3	A. 8.9	A. 5.1
B. 2.4	B. 2.7	B. 9.3	B. 3.7
C. 1.2	C. 0.0	C. 8.4	C. 9.6
D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 13.5	D. 3.4

ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
A. 13.9	A. 10.1	A. 3.8	A. 10.1
B. 13.2	B. 10.6	B. 8.4	B. 8.6
C. 8.4	C. 4.8	C. 13.2	C. 21.7
D. 19.1	D. 2.2	D. 15.7	D. 23.6

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FIGURE 1

COMPOSITE

A. WKU Students (n=79)
B. National Sample (n=1024)
C. Top 100 (n=83)
D. Rising Stars (n=89)

ISTJ A. 8.9	ISFJ A. 8.9	INFJ A. 5.1	INTJ A. 3.8
ISTP A. 2.5	ISFP A. 3.8	INFP A. 5.1	INTP A. 3.8
ESTP A. 0.0	ESFP A. 6.3	ENFP A. 8.9	ENTP A. 5.1
ESTJ A. 13.9	ESFJ A. 10.1	ENFJ A. 3.8	ENTJ A. 10.1

FIGURE 1

COMPOSITE

A. WKU Students (n=79)
B. National Sample (n=1024)
C. Top 100 (n=83)
D. Rising Stars (n=89)

B. 12.5	B. 7.4	B. 3.9	B. 5.3
B. 1.5	B. 2.6	B. 5.3	B. 2.5
B. 2.4	B. 2.7	B. 9.3	B. 3.7
B. 13.2	B. 10.6	B. 8.4	B. 8.6

FIGURE 1

COMPOSITE

A. WKU Students (n=79)
B. National Sample (n=1024)
C. Top 100 (n=83)
D. Rising Stars (n=89)

C. 9.6	C. 3.6	C. 4.8	C. 8.4
C. 0.0	C. 1.2	C. 3.6	C. 1.2
C. 1.2	C. 0.0	C. 8.4	C. 9.6
C. 8.4	C. 4.8	C. 13.2	C. 21.7

FIGURE 1

COMPOSITE

A. WKU Students (n=79)
B. National Sample (n=1024)
C. Top 100 (n=83)
D. Rising Stars (n=89)

D. 9.0	D. 0.0	D. 3.4	D. 6.7
D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 3.4
D. 0.0	D. 0.0	D. 13.5	D. 3.4
D. 19.1	D. 2.2	D. 15.7	D. 23.6